

WE CLAIM:

- Sub B1
1. A system for ablating tissue within
a body comprising
a guide element for introduction into a
body,
5 a region of energy emitting material on
the guide element, and
control means electronically coupling the
region to a source of energy that, when emitted by
the region, ablates tissue, the control means
10 including means for receiving a prescribed input
command and switching means responsive to the
prescribed input command for electronically
altering the energy emitting characteristics of
the region between emission as a zone of uniform
15 polarity and emission as zones of alternating
polarity.
2. A system according to claim 1
wherein, in response to another
prescribed input command, the switching means is
also operable for electronically varying the
5 length of the region where emission occurs.
3. A system according to claim 1
wherein, in response to another
prescribed input command, the switching means is
also operable for electronically altering the
5 energy emitting characteristics of the region to
block emission from a portion of the region while
allowing emission from another portion of the
region.
4. A system according to claim 1
wherein the guide element is elongated
along an axis,
wherein the region comprises an array of
5 energy emitting areas spaced apart along the axis

of the guid element.

5. A system according to claim 4 wherein each area comprises a band of energy emitting material wrapped about the axis of the guide element.

6. A system according to claim 4 wherein the areas comprise energy emitting material helically wrapped about and along the axis the guide body.

7. A system according to claim 1 wherein the guide element is elongated about an axis, and

5 wherein the region comprises at least two elongated strips of energy emitting material extending along the axis and spaced apart circumferentially about the axis of the guide element.

8. A system according to claim 7 wherein the strips comprise metallic material attached to the guide element.

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9. A system according to claim 7 wherein the strips comprise a coating of energy emitting material on the guide element.

10. A system according to claim 1 wherein the region comprises metallic material attached to the guide element.

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11. A system according to claim 1 wherein the region comprises a coating of energy emitting material on the guide body.

12. A system for ablating tissue within a body comprising a guide element for introduction into a body,

5 a region of energy emitting material on the guide element, and

control means electronically coupling the region to a source of energy which, when emitted by the region, ablates tissue, the control means including means for receiving a prescribed input command and switching means responsive to the prescribed input command for electronically altering the energy emitting characteristics of the region to block emission from a portion of the region while allowing emission from another portion of the region.

13. A system according to claim 12 wherein, in response to another prescribed input command, the switching means is operative for electronically varying the length of the region where emission is either blocked or allowed.

14. A system according to claim 12 wherein, in response to another prescribed input command, the switching means is operative for electronically altering the energy emitting characteristics of the region to allow emission from spaced apart first and second portions of the region while blocking emission from a third portion of the region located between the first and second portions.

15. A system according to claim 14 wherein, in response to another prescribed input command, the switching means is operative for electronically varying the length of at least one of the first, second, and third regions.

16. A system according to claim 12 wherein the guide element is elongated along an axis, wherein the region comprises an array of

5 nergy emitting areas spaced apart along the axis
of the guide element.

17. A system according to claim 12
wherein each area comprises a band of
energy emitting material wrapped about the axis of
the guide element.

18. A system according to claim 12
wherein the areas comprise energy
emitting material helically wrapped about and
along the axis the guide body.

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19. A system according to claim 12
wherein the region comprises metallic
material attached to the guide element.

Sub 3

20. A system according to claim 12
wherein the region comprises a coating of
energy emitting material on the guide body.

21. A method for ablating tissue within
a body comprising the steps of
introducing a guide element having a
region of energy emitting material into the body,
5 exposing the region to body tissue, and
electronically coupling the region to a
source of energy that, when emitted by the region,
ablates tissue, and

10 operating a switch that in one position
electronically alters the energy emitting
characteristics of the region to emit as a zone of
uniform polarity and that in another position
electronically alters the energy emitting
characteristics of the region to emit as zones of
15 alternating polarity.

22. A method according to claim 21
and further including the step of
electronically altering the energy emitting
characteristics of the region to block emission

5 from a portion of the region while allowing
emission from another portion of the region.

23. A method according to claim 21
and further including the step of
electronically varying the length of the region
where emission occurs.

24. A method for ablating tissue within
a body comprising the steps of

5 introducing a guide element having a
region of energy emitting material into the body,
exposing the region to body tissue, and
electronically coupling the region to a
source of energy that, when emitted by the region,
ablates tissue, and

10 electronically altering the energy
emitting characteristics of the region to block
emission from a portion of the region while
allowing emission from another portion of the
region.

25. A method according to claim 24
and further including the step of
electronically varying the length of the region
where emission is blocked.

26. A method according to claim 24
and further including the step of
electronically altering the energy emitting
characteristics of the region to allow emission
5 from spaced apart first and second portions of the
region while blocking emission from a third
portion of the region located between the first
and second portions.

27. A system according to claim 26
and further including the step of
electronically varying the length of at least one
of the first, second, and third regions.

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